CALIBER
COMICS
ISSUE 30
$3.95 USA $5.50 CAN
NEGATIVE
BURN
ROBB BIHUN
BRIAN BOLLAND
ZANDER CANNON
ROB DAVIS
DEREK DRYMON
VIRGIL ELVIN
PAUL ERICKSON
GRANT FUHST
PAUL FRICKE
DAVID GATZMER
JAY GELDHOF
NAT GERTLER
NOEL K. HANNAN
JANINE JOHNSTON
SEAN McKEEVER
JEFF NICHOLSON
MICHAEL AVON OEMING
STEFAN PETRUCHA
RANDY REYNALDO
BUDD ROOT
P. CRAIG RUSSELL
DOUG WHEELER
NOW
64
PAGES

NEGATIVE BURN

A Mad Hatter Studios International Product • Joe Pruett ~ Editor

VOLUME ONE • NUMBER THIRTY

THE RITUAL ..... Page 1
written by Stefan Petrucha
illustrated by Grant Fuhst

MR. MAMOULIAN ..... Page 10
written and illustrated
by Brian Bolland

THE FACTOR ..... Page 11
written by Nat Gertler
illustrated by Janine Johnston

THE PROMISE ..... Page 17
written and illustrated
by P. Craig Russell

ROB HAINES ..... Page 18
written and illustrated
by Randy Reynaldo

ACID LAD ..... Page 23
written and illustrated
by Michael Avon Oeming

THE BASEMENT ..... Page 24
written and illustrated
by Budd Root

THE BUNGY CORD ..... Page 34
written and illustrated
by Zander Cannon

TARGETS ..... Page 35
written by Sean McKeever
illustrated by Rob Davis

NO REGRETS ..... Page 41
written and illustrated by Jeff
Nicholson

OLD SAINT NICK ..... Page 46
written by Paul Erickson
illustrated by Paul Fricke

WHATEVER HAPPENED
TO DOC DONOVAN ..... Page 48
written by Noel K. Hannan
illustrated by Virgil Elvin

THE HOON ..... Page 54
written and illustrated
by Robb Bihun

BOYS WILL BE BOYS ..... Page 57
written and illustrated
by Derek Drymon

A THOUSAND PICTURES PLUS
ONE WORD ..... Page 62
written by Doug Wheeler
illustrated by David Gatzmer

Cover Art by Jay Geldhof

Contributing Editor: **Charles Moore**

Staff Letterer: **Roxanne Starr**

Production: **Nate Pride**

British Liaison: **Malcolm Bourne**

Graphic Designer: **Shinn Uehara**

Associate Publisher: **James Pruett**

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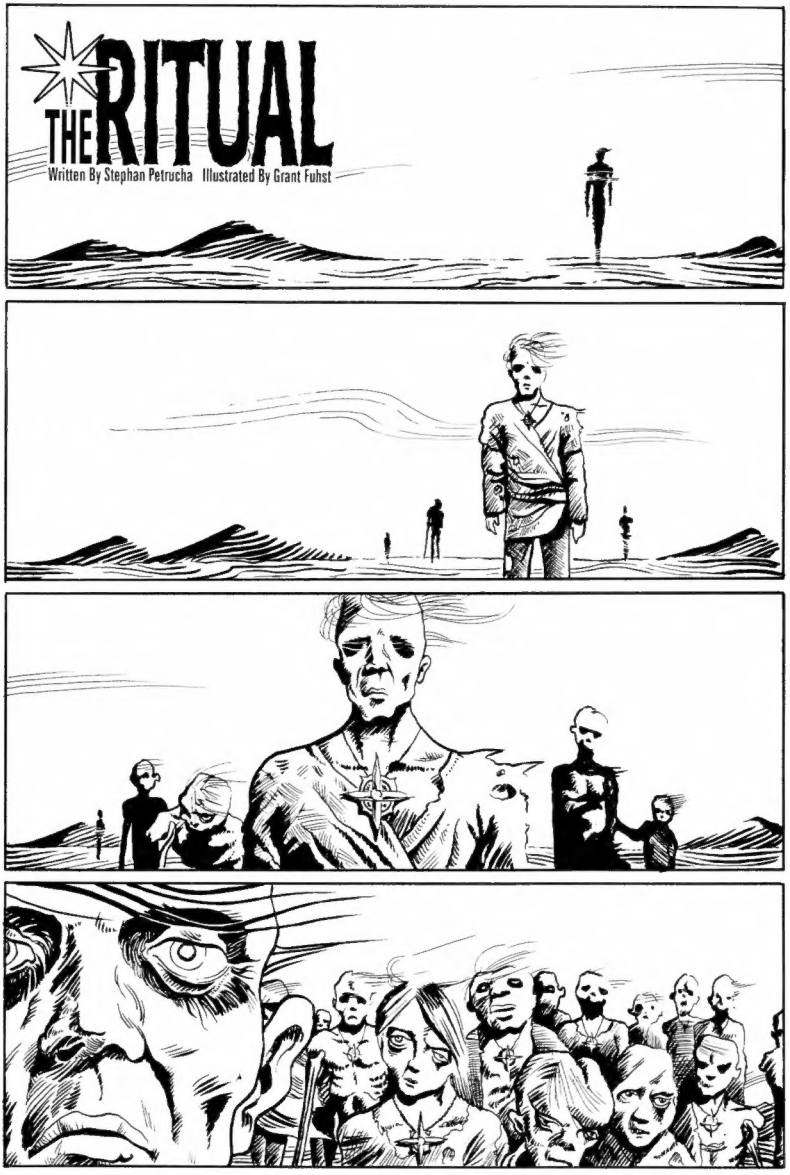
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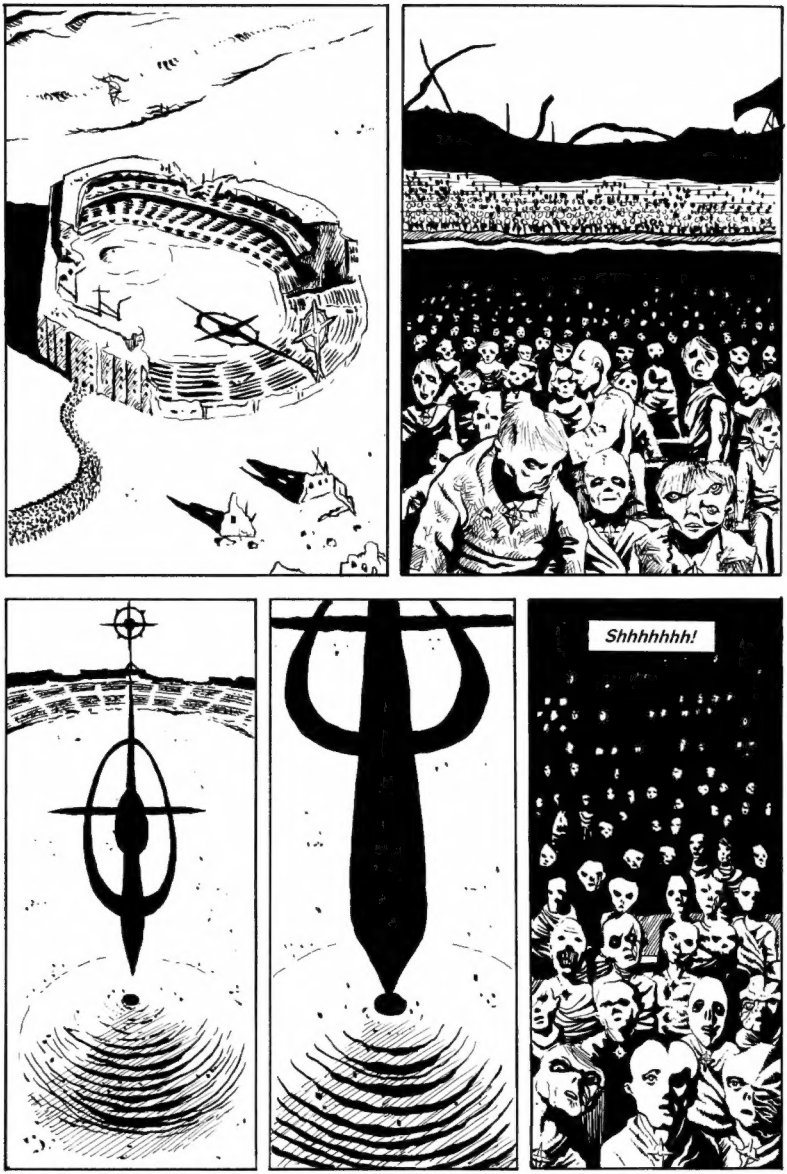
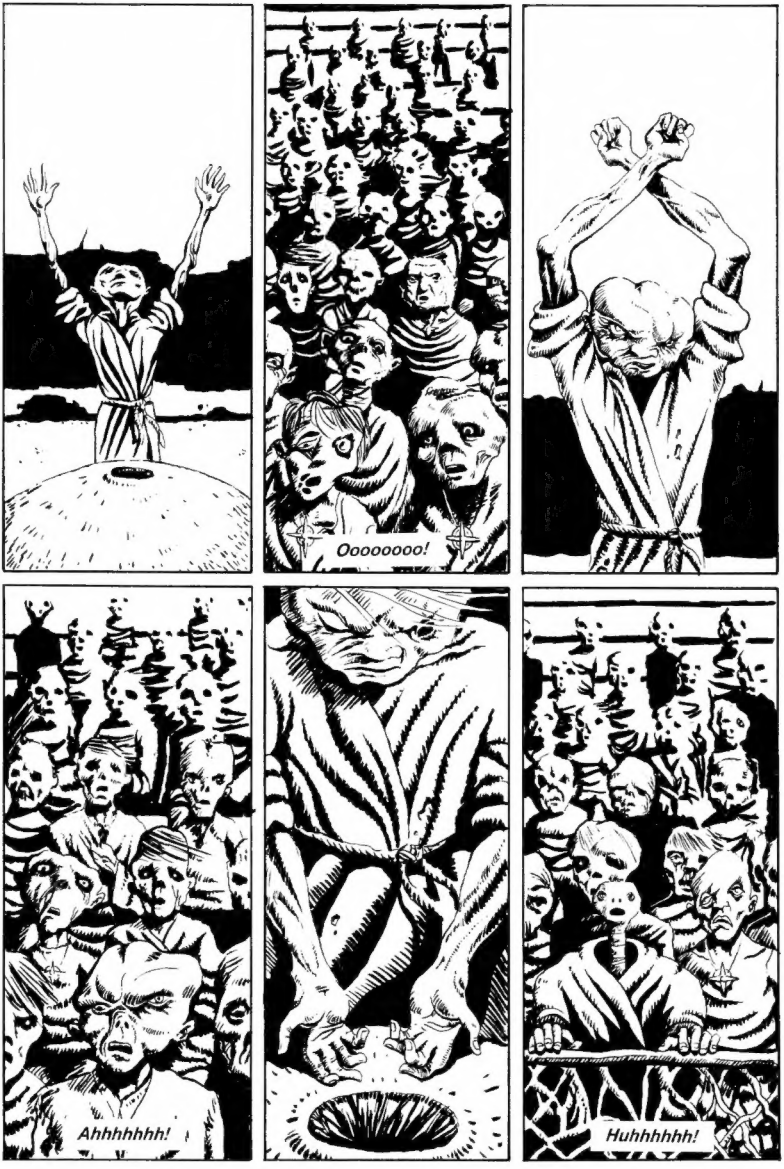
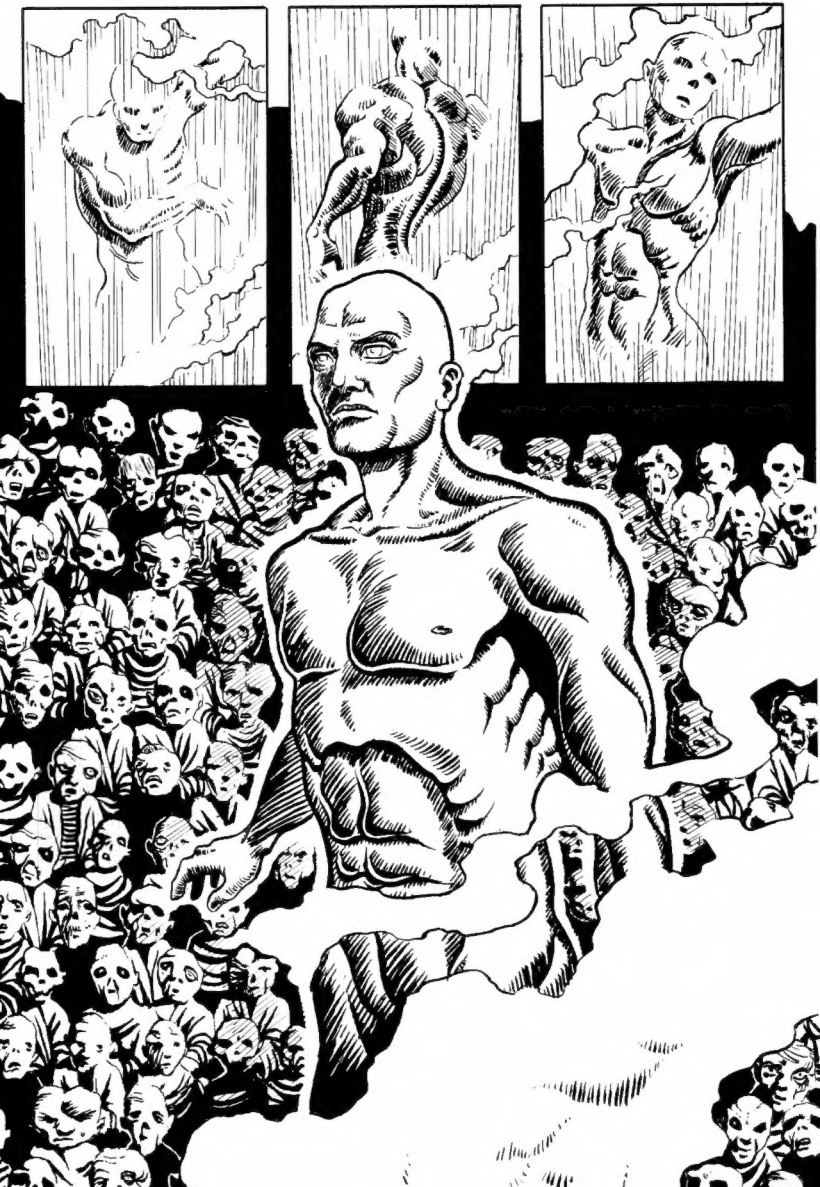
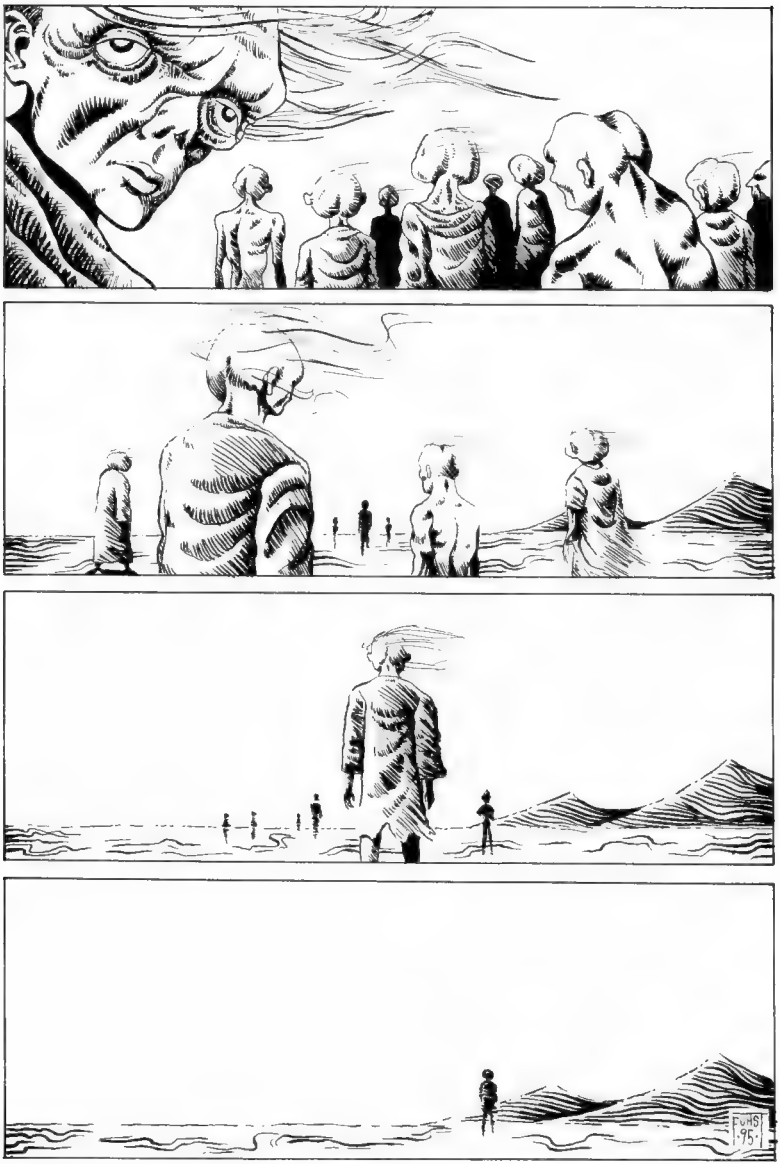

Shhhhhhh!


Oooooooo!
Ahhhhhhh!
Huhhhhhh!

Plp.
Prllp.
Psshhhh!
BARGHOOOOW!!!

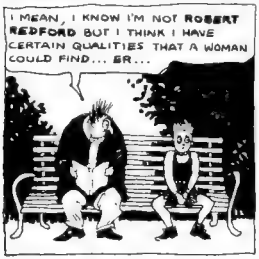


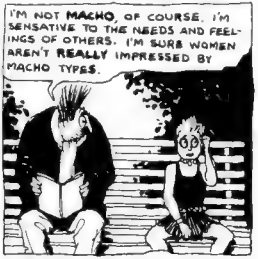

ERNST
'95

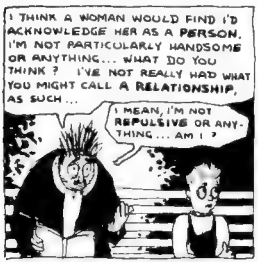
MR. MAMOULIAN

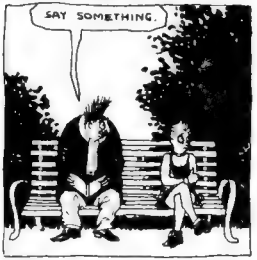
ROBERT REDFORD

22.8.88 BOLAND 33




I'M NOT MACHO, OF COURSE. I'M SENSATIVE TO THE NEEDS AND FEELINGS OF OTHERS. I'M SURE WOMEN AREN'T REALLY IMPRESSED BY MACHO TYPES.


I THINK A WOMAN WOULD FIND I'D ACKNOWLEDGE HER AS A PERSON. I'M NOT PARTICULARLY HANDSOME OR ANYTHING... WHAT DO YOU THINK ? I'VE NOT REALLY HAD WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A RELATIONSHIP, AS SUCH...
I MEAN, I'M NOT REPULSIVE OR ANYTHING... AM I ?



THE FACTOR:
ARMS AND THE MAN
PART TWO
...MYSTERIOUS PROTECTOR KNOWN ONLY BY HIS TABLOID-HEADLINE NAME "THE NEW FACTOR" HAS REAPPEARED, THIS TIME IN CENTRAL PARK
LILA!! LOOK! IT'S THAT MAN WHAT STOPPED THE BANK ROBBERS! MAYBE THEY MENTION YOU AGAIN!
HUMM?
DON'T BE SILLY, MAMA! I WAS JUST ONE OF THE TELLERS--
--AND THAT WAS WEEKS AGO EVEN I BARELY REMEMBER THAT I WAS THERE
POLICE REPORT A FAMILY OF TOURISTS FROM NORTH DAKOTA WERE BEING THREATENED BY GUN-WIELDING YOUTHS WHEN THE COSTUMED FIGURE...
PAUL SHOULD BE PICKING YOU UP AT ANY MINUTE. I LIKE THAT BOY. HE'S NICE
YES, YES HE IS.
OH, NO! NOT CAPTAIN BORING AGAIN!?
WHATTA YOU GUYS DO? SPEND LONG HOURS ON THE COUCH DISCUSSING THE THEORY OF KISSING?

DING DONG
HE'S RIGHT ON TIME AGAIN!
HELLO, MRS. MARTINEZ. HEY THERE, R.J.!
WELCOME ABOARD, CAPTAIN!
THOUGHT WE'D POP INTO MANHATTAN AND CATCH THAT NEW JUDGE REINHOLD FLICK, UNLESS THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'D PREFER?
THAT SOUNDS FINE!
I REALLY LIKE JUDGE REINHOLD. A LOT OF PEOPLE JUST THINK OF HIM AS EDDIE MURPHY'S SIDEKICK FROM THE BEVERLY HILLS COPS FILMS, BUT HE'S REALLY A GREAT LEADING MAN.
HE WAS REALLY
IN OFF BEAT, YOU
THAT FILM WHERE
A LIBRARIAN POSI
A COP? AND THEN
ERSA, WHIC
THE BEST O
SE BATCH
WITCH FILM
OT A FEW
RS BACK.

Lila.
WE'D BETTER GET TO THE SUBWAY STATION, LIL! YOU KNOW HOW I HATE MISSING THE START OF A MOVIE!

munch
munch
YOU SAVED ME!
I came just for you.
WHY?

ARE YOU OKAY? YOU'VE SEEMED ...
ELSEWHERE
I'M SORRY I'M OKAY, I REA...Y AM
IT ISN'T SOMETHING I'VE DONE, ... IS IT?
NO. WHAT COULD YOU HAVE DONE? YOU'RE A NICE GUY.
WHY?
I TRY.
I'M NEVER QUITE SURE IF I MAKE IT, THOUGH.

Because you deserve something better.
THANKS AGAIN FOR ANOTHER FINE EVENING
GOODNIGHT
79
THUMP
END OF PART TWO

La Promessa
The Promise
Song by Rossini
Poem by Metastasio
Adapted by
P. Craig Russell
'75.
"YOU ALONE ARE ALL MY LIGHT,
AND SHALL BE, DEAR EYES SO BRIGHT,
MY SOLITARY BEACON 'TILL I DIE,
MY SOLITARY BEACON, AH!"
"THAT MY ...OVE COULD EVER
PERISH. BELIEVE NOT THAT,
DEAR EYES I CHERISH; NOT
EVEN TO TEASE YOU, NOT EVEN
TO TEASE YOU WOULD I LIE..."
NO
NO
NO
"NOT EVEN TO TEASE,
YOU WOULD I LIE!"

EVERY SO OFTEN, ESPECIALLY DURING TIMES OF ***RECESSION*** LIKE TODAY, ***PRIVATE DETECTIVES*** ARE SOMETIMES FORCED INTO ***JOBS*** THEY WOULDN'T ORDINARILY TAKE,,, EVEN INVESTIGATORS FROM ***BIG AGENCIES*** LIKE ***JUSTICE INTERNATIONAL*** ARE NOT IMMUNE,,,

WHICH EXPLAINS WHY WE FIND **ROB HANES** AND HIS PARTNER AND FRIEND ***ABNER McKENNA*** IN THE ***APPALACHIANS*** IN THE ***DEAD*** OF ***WINTER*** WORKING AS,,,

BOUNTY HUNTERS!

by Randy Reynaldo

ANOTHER

ROB HANES

ADVENTURE!

© 1995 by Randy Reynaldo

ROB AND ABNER HAVE RECEIVED A HOT TIP ABOUT SAMUEL VAUGHN REYES, A BANK ROBBER WHO ESCAPED FROM PRISON TWO YEARS AGO,,,
YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT ADDRESS, ROBBY?
-Y'KNOW, IT'S EASY TO GET LOST IN HILL COUNTRY LIKE THIS!
YES, I'M SURE, ABNER!
JUST KEEP IT DOWN!

KEEP RUNNIN', Y'BASTARDS, Y'HEAR?
OR I'LL FILL YOU FULL O' LEAD!
BANG BANG
Y'OKAY, ROB?
GEEZ LOUISE, THAT HURT!
WELL, THEY DON'T CALL ME BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE HANES FOR NOTHING!
ABNER, I NEED A DIVERSION
D...DIVERSION? WHAT KIND OF DIVERSION? HE'S ARMED! AND IT'S COLD OUT HERE!
"ABNER--HAVE I EVER STEERED YOU WRONG?"
HEH HEH
BANG BANG
ZING!
BEEOW!
WHOA! THIS SIDEKICK BUSINESS IS DANGEROUS!
PUFF
GASP
Y'SHOULD SEE THIS, BETSY -- IT'S A TURKEY SHOOT!
BANG
THAT'S IT, REYES... KEEP SHOOTING!
2

BOOM
EEEK!
CRASH!

HAH!
CRACK
THANKS, LADY!
?!
WAP
BETSY! WHAT'RE YOU--
IT'S OVER, REYES!
YOU OKAY, BABY?
REYES? WHO'S REYES?!
YOU'RE NOT SAMUEL VAUGHN REYES? --THE BANK ROBBER?
ARE YOU NUTS?! I SELL HOT TUBS!
MY NAME IS GERARD SCHNABEL! I THOUGHT YOU WAS HERE SERVING COURT PAPERS FOR MY EX-WIFE!
LATER...
"...REPEATING TONIGHT'S TOP STORY-- FUGITIVE SAMUEL VAUGHN REYES HAS BEEN CAPTURED!
CK CROW INN
"...AN EAGLE-EYED LOCAL RESIDENT REPORTEDLY SPOTTED REYES THANKS TO A RECENT EPISODE OF AMERICA'S MOST DANGEROUS!
WELL, AT LEAST WE HAVE A DISCOUNT IF WE EVER NEED A HOT TUB.
THE END

ROB HANES appears in every issue of ADVENTURE STRIP DIGEST, self-published by writer/artist Randy Reynaldo under the WCG Comics imprint. Randy is the recipient of a 1995 Xeric Foundation Grant and a Russ Manning Award Nominee.

By the way, Rob is usually a little more successful than this!

WINNER OF A 1995 XERIC GRANT!

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WCG COMICS

1995 RUSS MANNING AWARD NOMINEE!

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— Indy

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— Kurt Busiek

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ACID LAD

ROCKA-BUY-BABY ON THE ROOF TOP...
WHEN THE WIND BLOWS, THE CRADLE WILL ROCK...
WHEN THE ROOF BREAKS...
THE CRADLE WILL FALL...
AND DOWN WILL COME BABY...
HEAD...
LEGS...
AND ALL.
AVON-9-18-94

Budds
Basement
by Budd
T.M. '95
BASEMENT
COMICS
MAY DIE...
Budd '95
GO AWAY
OR YOU
MAY DIE

HIIIISSSSSSS
SCREEEEEECH
HISSSSS-
SPAT!
??
!!

GRRRR!
FLICK
FLICK FLICK
FLASH
THREE

FLASH!

SHOT DE
GUN SH
CHINK
CHEEP
CHINK

HRRUUUGGH!
WANTED
BY THE
YONCY ST.
POLICE
CALIBER
CICKS

KWOOOOM!
GRAAAAA!!
GREOOONK

KRUMBLE
WUUHM!

SLAM!
The End!
Thanx For WATCHIN'. MWAH!, Budd 95

THE BUNGY CORD

The invention of the bungy cord has allowed mankind to engage in Thanatos-inspired acts without the previously unavoidable consequence: death.

As yet, the primary bungy-related activity remains 'jumping' from great heights, though various new applications of the form have arisen.

One of the latest, and most commercially viable, activities to harness (as it were) the life preserving qualities of the bungy cord is...

.. telling someone off.

end.

zander 94

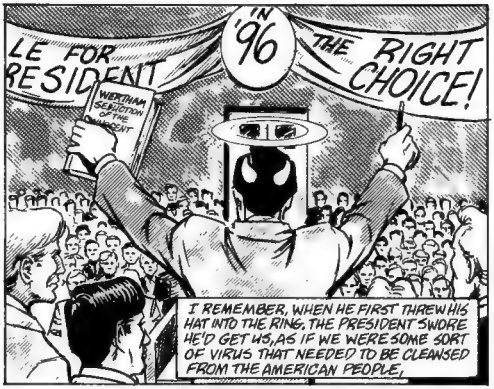
CAUTION
O NOT PLAY O
OR AROUND
HERE. NOW WE'VE EACH GOT A COPY.
CAUTION:
DO NOT PLAY ON OR AROUND
YOU READY?
I'M... I'M NOT SURE.
PROPERTY OF
U.S. GOVER
I MEAN, I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS, BUT I JUST...
I'M SCARED.
... I KNOW.
SO WE MAKE A GO FOR IT, RUNNING TOGETHER--
"YET FAR ENOUGH APART TO BE SEPERATE TARGETS.
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE ARE, SEE?

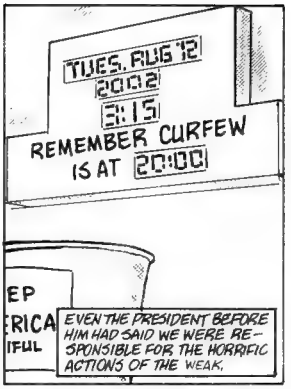
TARGETS

A public disservice announcement, brought to you by Sean Kelley McKeever and Rob Davis

ONLY TAKES ABOUT 7 SECONDS FOR THE FIRST SHARK TO SHOW. YOU NEVER EVEN KNOW IT'S THERE UNTIL IT'S RIGHT ON TOP OF YOU AND THEY HOP OUTTA STEALTH.
I GUESS THEY FIGURE ALL THAT NOISE MAKES US DISORIENTED AND RUSHED SO WE'LL RUN AROUND AIMLESSLY, LIKE RATS.
THEY'D BE RIGHT ABOUT THAT, BUT I'VE GOTTEN WISE TO 'EM.
I'VE GOT EAR PLUGS.
BY NOW, THEY'RE PROBABLY SHOUTING SOME GARBAGE OVER THE P.A. ABOUT GIVING UP NOW SO THEY'LL HAVE MERCY ON US LATER.
THEY LOVE TO SAY THAT CRAP, IT MAKES THEM FEEL IMPORTANT.
I'M SURE THEY'RE PERFECTLY LOYAL, BRAINLESS ZOMBIES.
I MEAN, HOW ELSE COULD THEY EXTERMINATE US?
ONCE THEY START, I FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING! ABOUT THE WORLD, MY MISSION, ABOUT HER-
-I FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING BUT MY LIFE, AND NOW I REALLY BOOK.

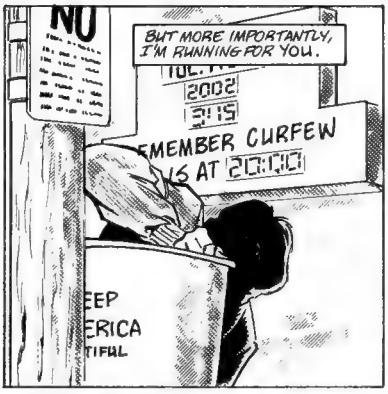
"DODGE AND LEAP". THAT'S WHAT PAUL TAUGHT ME--AND TAUGHT WELL--UNTIL THE NIGHT THE PRESIDENT GOT A HOLD OF HIM.
NOW HE'S WITH THE REST OF US WHO WEREN'T SO LUCKY.
NOW HE'S WITH FRANK AND DAVE AND HARLAN AND PETER AND NEIL -oh god, neil, i still can't believe they got to you- AND RICK AND JOHN AND... RICK... NEIL...
...and stan...
...and...
3.


LE FOR
RESIDENT
IN '96
THE RIGHT
CHOICE!
WERTHAM SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT
I REMEMBER, WHEN HE FIRST THREW HIS HAT INTO THE RING, THE PRESIDENT SWORE HE'D GET US, AS IF WE WERE SOME SORT OF VIRUS THAT NEEDED TO BE CLEANSED FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE,

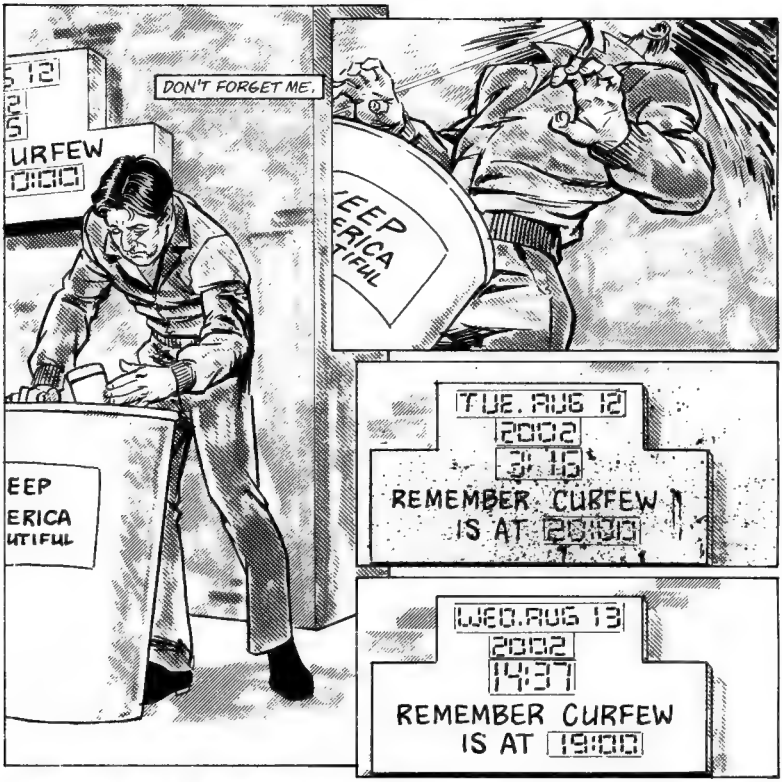

TUES. AUG 12
2002
3:15
REMEMBER CURFEW
IS AT 20:00
EVEN THE PRESIDENT BEFORE HIM HAD SAID WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HORRIFIC ACTIONS OF THE WEAK.

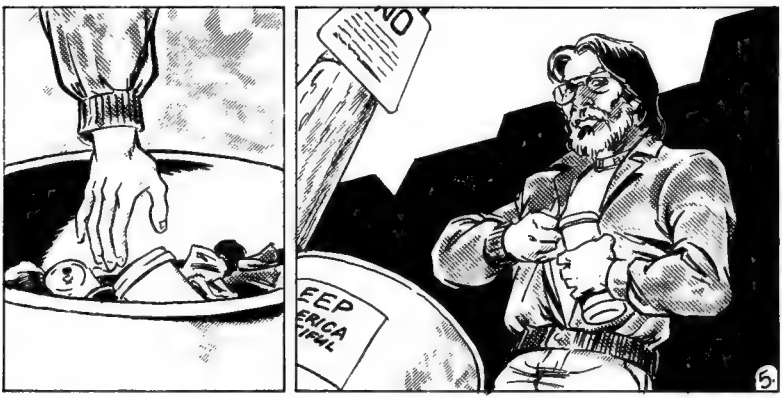
IT WAS OUR FAULT: WE PULLED ALL THOSE TRIGGERS; WE HANDED DAHMER A KNIFE AND SAID, "GO GET THEM FAGGOTS, JEFFREY!" WE TOLD KORESH'S FOLLOWERS TO BURN WITH HIM.
JAPAN
THE BUCK STOPS HERE

TUE. AUG 12
2002
3:15
REMEMBER CURFEW
IS AT 20:00
SO NOW HERE I AM, RUNNING FOR MY LIFE,

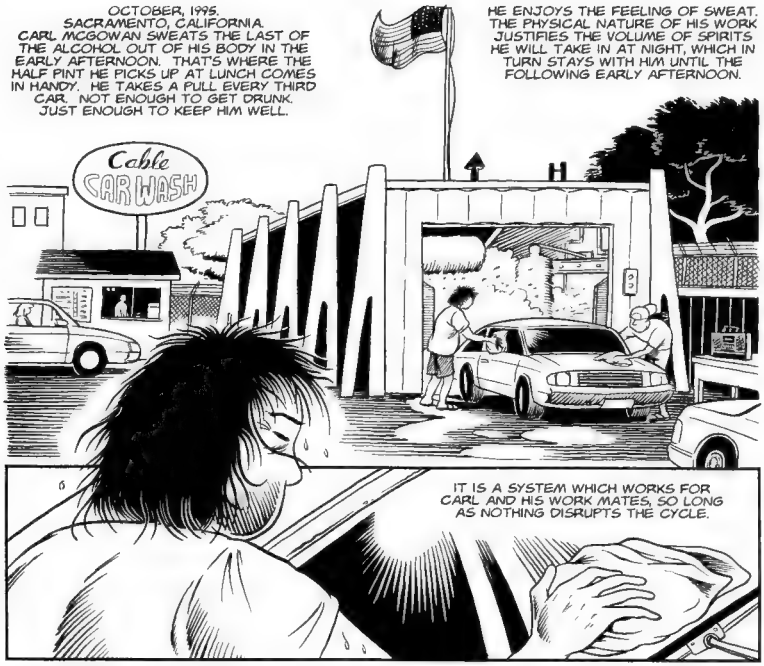

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, I'M RUNNING FOR YOU.
2002
3:15
REMEMBER CURFEW
IS AT 20:00

I'M RUNNING FOR YOUR FREEDOMS, PEOPLE,


DON'T FORGET ME.
URFEW
0:00
EEP
ERICA
UTIFUL
TUE. AUG 12
2002
21:45
REMEMBER CURFEW
IS AT 20:00
WED. AUG 13
2002
14:37
REMEMBER CURFEW
IS AT 19:00


EEP
ERICA
TIFUL
5.

548
131
TARGETS
SEAN KELLEY McKEEVER
16 MAY 1995
INK
Kelley McKeever
END

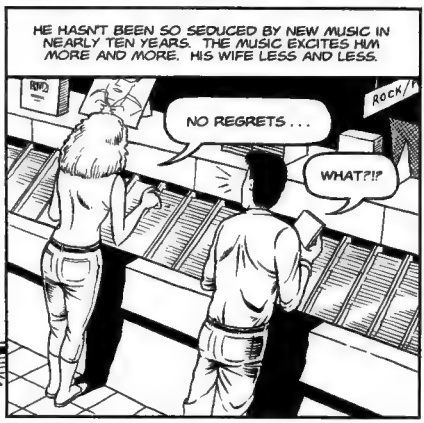

OCTOBER, 1995.
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA.
CARL MCGOWAN SWEATS THE LAST OF THE ALCOHOL OUT OF HIS BODY IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON. THAT'S WHERE THE HALF PINT HE PICKS UP AT LUNCH COMES IN HANDY. HE TAKES A PULL EVERY THIRD CAR. NOT ENOUGH TO GET DRUNK. JUST ENOUGH TO KEEP HIM WELL.
HE ENJOYS THE FEELING OF SWEAT. THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF HIS WORK JUSTIFIES THE VOLUME OF SPIRITS HE WILL TAKE IN AT NIGHT, WHICH IN TURN STAYS WITH HIM UNTIL THE FOLLOWING EARLY AFTERNOON.
Cable
CAR WASH
IT IS A SYSTEM WHICH WORKS FOR CARL AND HIS WORK MATES, SO LONG AS NOTHING DISRUPTS THE CYCLE.

NO REGRETS {1} the boy who disappeared

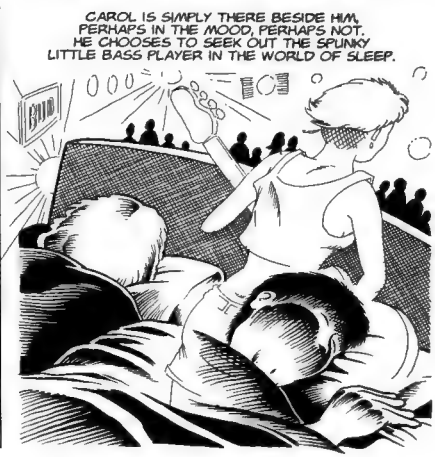
NO REGRETS?
YEAH, THIS IS THE FIRST ALBUM. THEY'RE PART OF THAT ALTERNATIVE OR WHATEVER. THEY KICK ASS.
THAT WAS THE NAME OF MY BAND, MAN! TEN YEARS AGO!
AW, BULL! YOU WERE NEVER IN A BAND, MCGOWAN.
LIKE I COULDN'T HAVE HAD A LIFE BEFORE THIS? I'M A DRUMMER, MAN!
JUST SHUT UP AND LISTEN TO THE TAPE, LOSER.

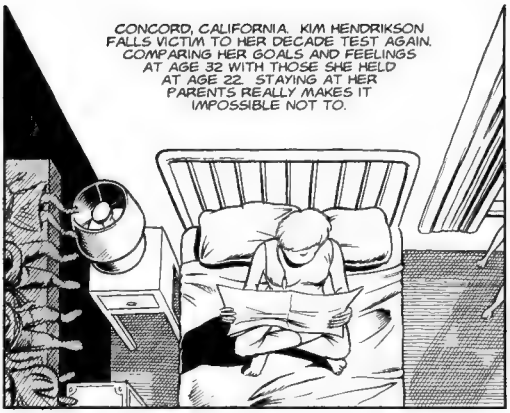
IN A SMALL WAY, THE CYCLE IS DISRUPTED. REROUTED INTO THE PAST, WHEN BEER AND BITTERNESS TURN TO SLEEP.
AUBURN. WE HAVE A GIG IN AUBURN. DAMMIT, WHAT TIME IS IT?
I DON'T REMEMBER EVER HAVING HAD ANY GIGS IN AUBURN . . .

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. MIKE FLYNN GRABS OUT AT CDS LIKE A TODDLER IN A SWEETS ISLE. CAROL REMINDS HIM OF HIS LIMIT.


HE HASN'T BEEN SO SEDUCED BY NEW MUSIC IN NEARLY TEN YEARS. THE MUSIC EXCITES HIM MORE AND MORE. HIS WIFE LESS AND LESS.
NO REGRETS . . .
WHAT?!?
ROCK/P

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE STOLE THE NAME OF YOUR STUPID OLD BAND YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT.
NO WAY! GOD! WE COULDN'T GIVE THIS SOUND AWAY BACK THEN. NOW THESE KIDS GO TO THE TOP OVERNIGHT.


CAROL IS SIMPLY THERE BESIDE HIM, PERHAPS IN THE MOOD, PERHAPS NOT. HE CHOOSES TO SEEK OUT THE SPUNKY LITTLE BASS PLAYER IN THE WORLD OF SLEEP.


CONCORD, CALIFORNIA. KIM HENDRIKSON FALLS VICTIM TO HER DECADE TEST AGAIN. COMPARING HER GOALS AND FEELINGS AT AGE 32 WITH THOSE SHE HELD AT AGE 22. STAYING AT HER PARENTS REALLY MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO.

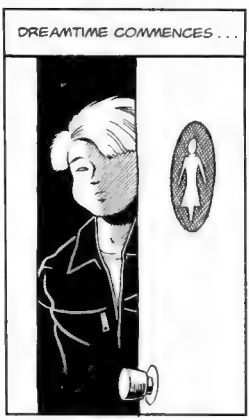
THE TEST CONFIRMS: THEY DON'T CALL HER 'SPUNKY' ANYMORE. SHE DOESN'T PLAY MUSIC ANYMORE.
HONEY!
YEAH, MOM . . .

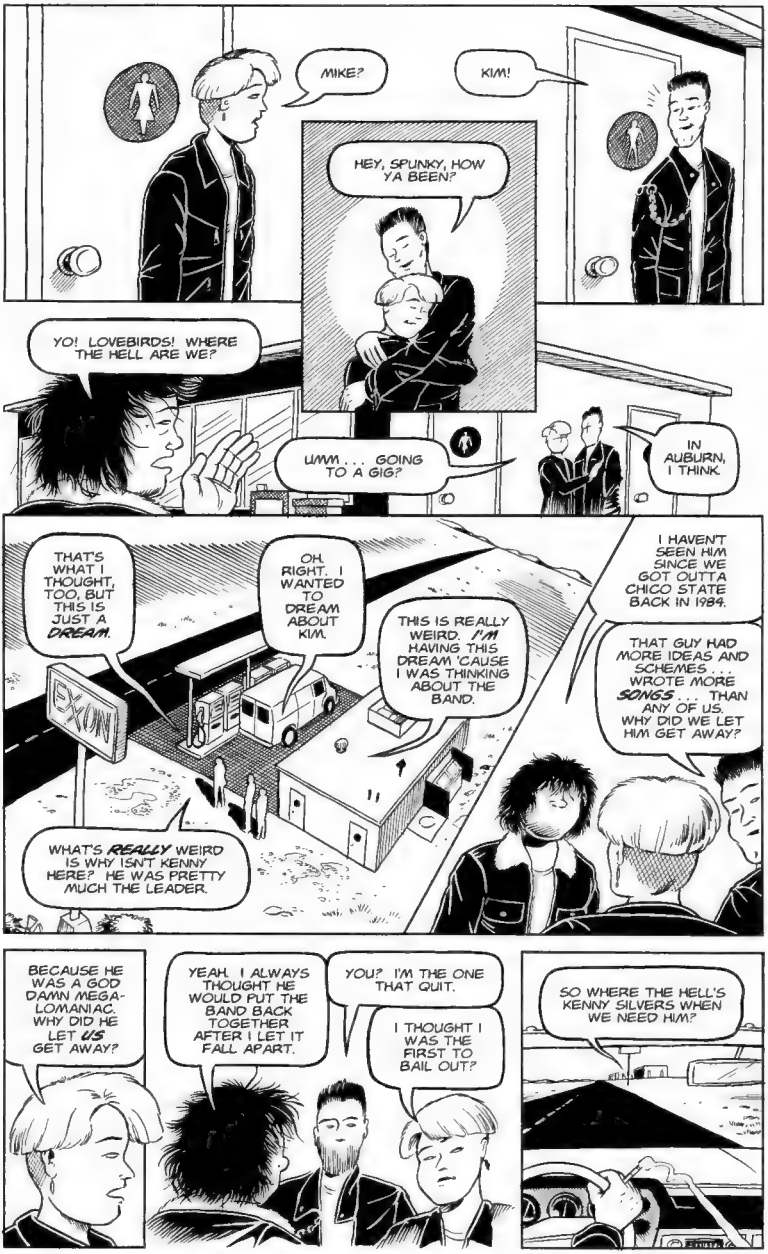
I HAD AN IDEA. IF YOU GO OUT LOOKING TODAY, RECORD STORES! YOU USED TO LOVE MUSIC SO MUCH, REMEMBER?
MOM, THEY DON'T PAY SQUAT AND IT WOULD BE PART TIME. YOU DIDN'T SEND ME TO COLLEGE FOR THAT.
JUST TRYING TO HELP. IT'S NEARLY NOON YOU KNOW.

HMPF. A NEW BAND CALLED NO REGRETS. HOW FUNNY . . .

OPENING FOR THE BREEDERS?!?
CLASSIFIEDS

THIS DAY IS ABORTED.


DREAMTIME COMMENCES . . .


MIKE?
KIM!
HEY, SPUNKY, HOW YA BEEN?
YO! LOVEBIRDS! WHERE THE HELL ARE WE?
UMM . . . GOING TO A GIG?
IN AUBURN, I THINK.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE WE GOT OUTTA CHICO STATE BACK IN 1984.
THAT GUY HAD MORE IDEAS AND SCHEMES . . . WROTE MORE SONGS . . . THAN ANY OF US. WHY DID WE LET HIM GET AWAY?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO, BUT THIS IS JUST A DREAM.
OH, RIGHT. I WANTED TO DREAM ABOUT KIM.
THIS IS REALLY WEIRD. I'M HAVING THIS DREAM 'CAUSE I WAS THINKING ABOUT THE BAND.
EXXON
WHAT'S REALLY WEIRD IS WHY ISN'T KENNY HERE? HE WAS PRETTY MUCH THE LEADER.
BECAUSE HE WAS A GOD DAMN MEGA-LOMANIAC. WHY DID HE LET US GET AWAY?
YEAH. I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WOULD PUT THE BAND BACK TOGETHER AFTER I LET IT FALL APART.
YOU? I'M THE ONE THAT QUIT.
I THOUGHT I WAS THE FIRST TO BAIL OUT?
SO WHERE THE HELL'S KENNY SILVERS WHEN WE NEED HIM?

I THINK HE MARRIED THAT JENNIFER CHICK HE WAS SO CRAZY ABOUT.
NO. SHE WAS PRETTY MAINSTREAM. SOMEONE TOLD ME HE COULDN'T HANDLE THE DOMESTICATED NINE TO FIVE LIFE AND CHUMPED HER.
BUT HE LOVED HER SO MUCH . . .
THAT WAS JUST A DREAM. THE REAL STORY BEGINS NOW. THIS IS REALITY.
KENNY!
SORRY, KIDS, BUT THAT'S NOT HOW IT HAPPENED.
HOP IN, MATES.
IN AN ODD SILENCE, THEY FOLLOW.
EXXON
IN AN EVEN QUIETER AND MUCH MORE DISTURBING MANNER, OTHERS FOLLOW.

OLD SAINT NICK

Your elf-slaves are exhausted
as you leave your arctic lair
With unearthly powers you fly south
You fly by night, one night a year

You break into our homes
Sliding down chimneys, like
Freud's Worst Nightmare
To rape us with your toys
Toys that always disappoint and dismember
Breaking into useless, vicious pieces

Your devilish red suit
Is trimmed with the white fur of baby seals
In engineer boots and too-wide black belt
King of the Kung-Fu biker Leatherboys
Or worse

Bloated body
Nose and cheeks livid with rage or lust or liquor
The last of the pirates, you yell
YO HO HO!
Searching for children to sit on your lap
Or worse

Do you deal with the devil?
Does Satan get your list of people who are bad?
Are you Satan's spy,
Mr. Naughty Or Nice?
Have you crawled out of hell to pollute
Christmas Night?

Demon on the house top
Ringing sleigh bells
Santa Claus, Santa Claus,
Go back to hell!

Poem by
PAUL ERICKSON
Illustrations by
PAUL FRICKE

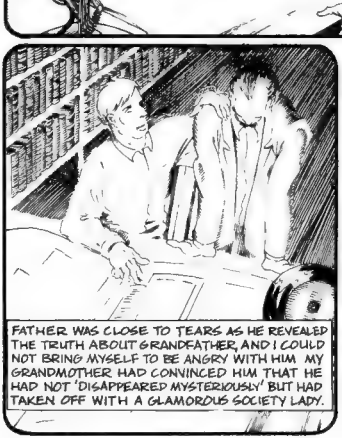
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DOC DONOVAN?

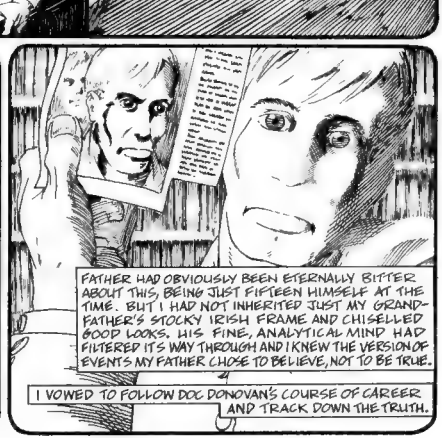
SCRIPT– NOEL K. HANNAN
ART/LETTERING– VIRGIL ELVIN
IT HAS BEEN A LONG JOURNEY FOR ME TO MY FINAL DESTINATION, THESE MAJESTIC TIBETAN PEAKS–
– THE ROOF OF THE WORLD.

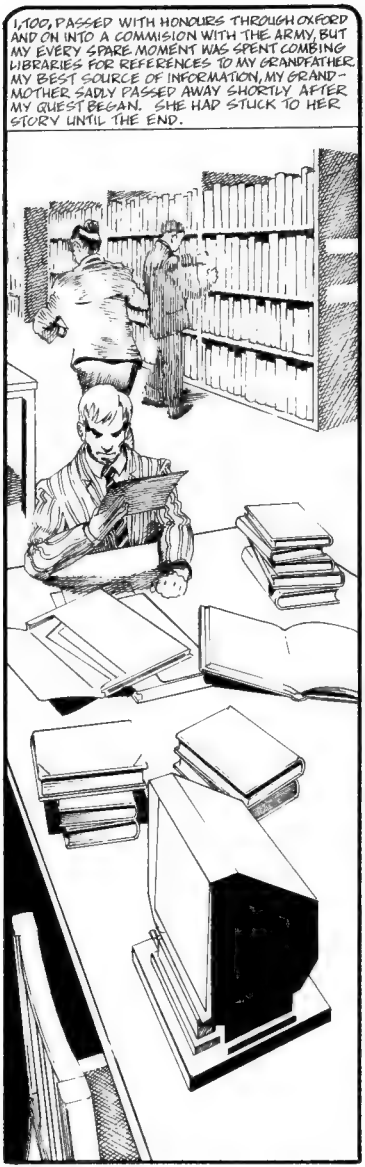
IT BEGAN **TEN YEARS AGO**, WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN YEARS OLD, AND MY FATHER FIRST REVEALED TO ME THE STORY OF MY GRANDFATHER, THE LEGENDARY '30s ADVENTURER, **DOC DONOVAN**, WHO DISAPPEARED UNDER **MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES** IN 1950.

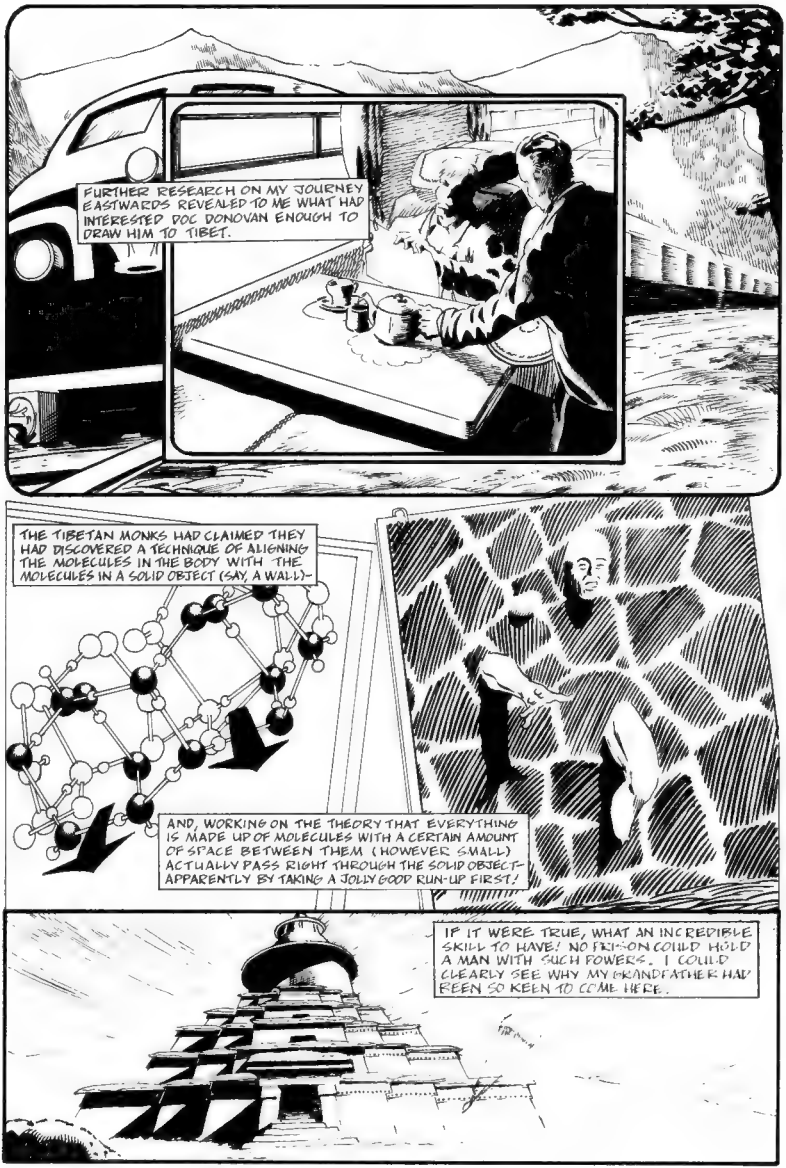
DOC DONOVAN WAS – IS – AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN.
OXFORD GRADUATE, ARMY OFFICER, BRILLIANT SCIENTIFIC BRAIN, HE WAS THE DOYEN OF THE '30s MEDIA –
WORLD RECORDER
HINDENBURG'S SUCCESSOR– FROM HOUSEPAINTER TO DICTATOR
– A LIVING PULP HERO, WITH HIS EXOTIC AND DRAMATIC SAFARIS AND DARING RESCUES FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH (AND THE TWIN EVILS OF FASCISM AND COMMUNISM) RIGHT ACROSS THE GLOBE.
DONOVAN TRIUMPHS!

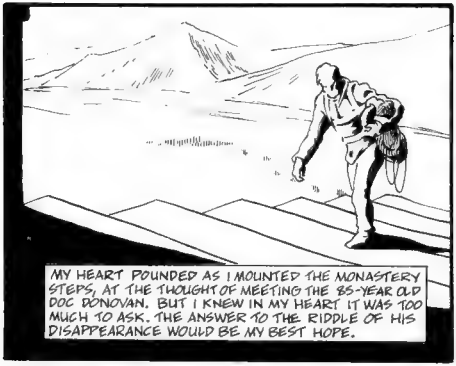
I HAD SUSPECTED MY FATHER OF KEEPING SOMETHING FROM ME SINCE MY EARLY TEENS
WE LIVED IN A FAIR DEGREE OF OPULENCE CONSIDERING FATHER, A FRAIL MAN, WAS THE EDITOR OF A NONDESCRIPT NEWSPAPER (I LATER FOUND OUR WEALTH WAS THE RESULT OF A TRUST FUND).

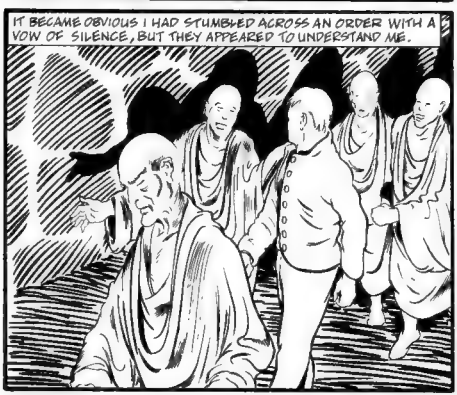

FATHER WAS CLOSE TO TEARS AS HE REVEALED THE TRUTH ABOUT GRANDFATHER, AND I COULD NOT BRING MYSELF TO BE ANGRY WITH HIM. MY GRANDMOTHER HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT HE HAD NOT 'DISAPPEARED MYSTERIOUSLY' BUT HAD TAKEN OFF WITH A GLAMOROUS SOCIETY LADY.


FATHER HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN ETERNALLY BITTER ABOUT THIS, BEING JUST FIFTEEN HIMSELF AT THE TIME. BUT I HAD NOT INHERITED JUST MY GRANDFATHER'S STOCKY IRISH FRAME AND CHISELLED GOOD LOOKS. HIS FINE, ANALYTICAL MIND HAD FILTERED ITS WAY THROUGH AND I KNEW THE VERSION OF EVENTS MY FATHER CHOSE TO BELIEVE, NOT TO BE TRUE.
I VOWED TO FOLLOW DOC DONOVAN'S COURSE OF CAREER AND TRACK DOWN THE TRUTH.


I,100, PASSED WITH HONOURS THROUGH OXFORD AND ON INTO A COMMISION WITH THE ARMY, BUT MY EVERY SPARE MOMENT WAS SPENT COMBING LIBRARIES FOR REFERENCES TO MY GRANDFATHER. MY BEST SOURCE OF INFORMATION, MY GRANDMOTHER, SADLY PASSED AWAY SHORTLY AFTER MY QUEST BEGAN. SHE HAD STUCK TO HER STORY UNTIL THE END.
MY SECOND GREATEST MINE OF INFORMATION WERE NEWSPAPERS IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY. IT WAS HERE THAT I STUMBLED UPON MY LEAD. AS AN ACCOMPLISHED PUGILIST, GRANDFATHER WAS A PIONEER IN DISCOVERING AND MASTERING STRANGE FORMS OF EASTERN COMBAT ARTS, AND A NEWSPAPER REPORT SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE REMARKED ON A FORTHCOMING TRIP TO A SECULAR MONASTERY IN TIBET TO LEARN OF THE 'ULTIMATE FIGHTING SKILLS'.
West meets East - round one to Donovan?
HEY!
I WASTED NO TIME.


FURTHER RESEARCH ON MY JOURNEY EASTWARDS REVEALED TO ME WHAT HAD INTERESTED DOC DONOVAN ENOUGH TO DRAW HIM TO TIBET.
THE TIBETAN MONKS HAD CLAIMED THEY HAD DISCOVERED A TECHNIQUE OF ALIGNING THE MOLECULES IN THE BODY WITH THE MOLECULES IN A SOLID OBJECT (SAY, A WALL)-
AND, WORKING ON THE THEORY THAT EVERYTHING IS MADE UP OF MOLECULES WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SPACE BETWEEN THEM (HOWEVER SMALL) ACTUALLY PASS RIGHT THROUGH THE SOLID OBJECT- APPARENTLY BY TAKING A JOLLY GOOD RUN-UP FIRST!
IF IT WERE TRUE, WHAT AN INCREDIBLE SKILL TO HAVE! NO PRISON COULD HOLD A MAN WITH SUCH POWERS. I COULD CLEARLY SEE WHY MY GRANDFATHER HAD BEEN SO KEEN TO COME HERE.


MY HEART POUNDED AS I MOUNTED THE MONASTERY STEPS, AT THE THOUGHT OF MEETING THE 85-YEAR OLD DOC DONOVAN. BUT I KNEW IN MY HEART IT WAS TOO MUCH TO ASK. THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE OF HIS DISAPPEARANCE WOULD BE MY BEST HOPE.


IT BECAME OBVIOUS I HAD STUMBLED ACROSS AN ORDER WITH A VOW OF SILENCE, BUT THEY APPEARED TO UNDERSTAND ME.

THEY GUIDED ME THROUGH THE LABYRINTHINE MONASTERY, AND I KNEW THE TIME TO MEET MY LONG-LOST GRANDFATHER WAS NEAR..

THE MONKS WERE AGHAST AT MY APPEARANCE— WAS IT MERELY A STRANGER AND A WESTERN FACE, OR DID I LOOK SO MUCH LIKE DOC DONOVAN? I HAD TAKEN THE SENSIBLE PRECAUTION OF LEARNING A LITTLE RUDIMENTARY TIBETAN.
«I, GRANDSON OF DOC DONOVAN. YOU KNOW OF HIM? HE COMES HERE, FORTY YEARS AGO!»

THE SECRET IS NO MORE. THE TRUTH IS KNOWN, MY QUEST COMPLETE. GRANDFATHER DID INDEED TRAVEL HERE TO DISCOVER THE AMAZING POWERS OF THE TIBETAN MONKS. HOWEVER, JUST THIS ONCE, THAT FINE, ANALYTICAL MIND, ONCE THE TOAST OF WESTERN SOCIETY....

....HAD SADLY LET HIM DOWN.
ENID

TALES OF THE HOON™
SO YA WANNA MESS WIT DA HOON, HUH?! DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YA.
ROBB BIHUN
STORY & ART
REBECCA BIHUN
LETTERS
ONCE I PLACE THIS HERE PIECE, I DO BELIEVE THAT WILL MAKE IT CHECKMATE
CHEAT! CHEAT! YOU'RE A CHEAT, I SAY
CHEAT?! HOW CAN I CHEAT?! I'M A GOOD GUY!

AAAAA! GOOD GUY SCHMOOD GUY! ALL YOU SUPER-TYPES ARE ALIKE, I SAY!
IT'S A CONSPIRACY I TELL YA! FIRST IT'LL BE US SENIOR CITIZENS, THEN YOU'LL WANNA TAKE OVER THE WORLD!
WHA?!? I'M PLAYIN' CHESS! HOW CAN I TAKE OVER THE WORLD BY PLAYING CHESS?!
I CAN SEE RIGHT THRU YOUR LITTLE SCHEME, HOON.
CHESS IS JUST PART OF YOUR STRATEGY!
LOOK, I WON FAIR AND SQUARE! IF YOU'RE GONNA BE A SORE LOSER ABOUT THIS...
AAAAA!
...DON'T TALK TO ME, I DON'T LISTEN TO CHEATERS.
FINE! IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA ACT YOUR AGE, THEN MAYBE I WON'T PLAY WITH YOU!
♫ I CAN'T HEAR YOU, I CAN'T HEAR YOU! ♫
4

LOOK, THIS IS SILLY! I TELL YA WHAT, HOW 'BOUT YOU PICK DA GAME THIS TIME
LA
O K ?
OK?!
FFINE!
GOOD! NOW TELL ME, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TA PLAY ?
WELL ?..
TIC-TAC-TOE
THEN TIC-TAC-TOE IT IS! I HAPPEN TA HAVE PAPER N' PENCILS HANDY
I'LL GO FIRST
CHEAT! CHEAT!
WHAT ?! WHAT ?! HOW CAN I CHEAT ?!
IT'S DA END OF DA WORLD I TELL YA!
END
3

EENIE WEENIE COMICS PRESENT
BOYS WILL BE BOYS
BY JERRY DRYNON ©1115
AS SEEN IN FUNNY TIME FEATURES
GIN!!! DAT MEANS I WIN, SO'S OFF WID 'EM!!
MAN THIS IS SO LAME!!
HEE HEE WHO WHO HA
WHAT FUN IS IT PLAYING STRIP POKER WITH NO DAMES!!
YA YOU ARE UGLIER ZEN NORMAL VEN NAKED!
YOCK
I'M NOT KIDDING, FELLAS HERE IT IS FRIDAY NIGHT...
AND WE GOT NO CHICKS!!
JEEEESE, MAYBE WE A BUNCH'A LOOSA'S.
DON'T LOOK AT ME, I GOT SKIRTS KRAWLING ALL OVER ME!

OH YEA? DON JUAN... THEN WHIP OUT YOUR LITTLE BLACK BOOK AND GET US SOME BROADS
WELL IT'S FUNNY BUT ZEY ALL HAPPEN TO BE OUT OF TOWN ZIS WEEK...
YOU'RE SO FULL OF...
HEY! DERE'S A COUPLE A GOILS ON OUR VERY OWN STREET CORNER
VELL. VELL
WHYNT YA GIVE EM A HOLLER, INK?
HEY LADIES, YOU LOOKIN FOR A GOOD TIME?
WE SURE ARE!!
THEN HI-TAIL IT ON UP BABY!!!
FIVE BONE SAYS I SCORE BEFORE YOU!!
YOU'RE ON!
WHAT'A YOU'S GUYS PLAYIN?
DING-DONG
C'MON IN GIRLS!!
HOWDY, SHORT-STUFF...
MY NAME'S COWGIRL
AND I'M IN-JEN

DOSE GOILS LOOK FAMIL-YA LIKE..
YAH. I'VE SEEN ZEM IN MEIN DREAMS!!
BLA BLA BLA
BLA BLA
CRIME LIBRARY
I KNOW I'S SEEN DEM BEFORE
I'LL CHECK DA MOST WANTED FILES
HOLY CRUD!!
WANTED
I KNEW I SEEN DEM GOILS BEFORE!!
CRIMINAL TRANSVESTITES
IN-JEN
COW-GIRL
WANTED
FOR MURDER, ARSON, ROBBERY, THEFT, AND OTHER BAD STUFF
(REAL NAMES: LOU + FEE)
BUT DEM GOILS AIN'T FE'MALE!!
HOLD IT RIGHT DERE, YOUSE PHONY FEM-NINES!

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FOUND US OUT, PARDNER,*
BUT NOW WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO SCALP YA!*
*VERY DEEP MANLY VOICE
WOO WOO WOO WOO
YAAAA!!
YE HA!!
444! 444! 44!
DO ME A FAVOR, WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF ROOM, SO JUST IMAGINE A BIG OL' FIGHT SCENE AND THE MANMYTH WINS. THEN THE COPS SHOW UP.
SUPER TOWN POLICE
OKAY, INKBLOT, HERES ZA FIVE I OWE YOU, FOR ME LOZING ZA BET!
OH NO YOU DON'T, I DIDN'T EVEN GET CLOSE TO SCORING TONIGHT!!!
I ZINK YOU DID QVITE VELL
UP YOURS, NAZI! I SAW YOU GOING TO TOWN THERE YOURSELF!!
DID YOU'S GUYS PLAY A GAME AN NOT INVITE ME?
END

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A THOUSAND PICTURES PLUS ONE WORD

WORD: DOUG WHEELR

PICTURES: DAVID GATZMER

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO FAN-BOY?
I WAS COERCED BY PUBLISHER MANIPULATION TO OVER-ORDER PSYCHOTIC HERO-MAN #1. NOW I'M STUCK WITH HUNDREDS OF WORTHLESS COPIES!
YOU COULDN'T HELP IT. RETAILER-MAN! IT WAS PUBLISHED BY ILLUSION COMICS!!! AND WHIZZER MAGAZINE PROMISED THAT ALL THE MILLIONS OF COPIES PRINTED WOULD BE EXTREMELY RARE AND VALUABLE!

HEY LOOK RETAILER-MAN! IT'S THAT COLOR-BLIND WEIRD GUY FROM SEATTLE, WHO COMES IN HERE EVERY WEEK TO BUY OVER-PRICED JUNK WITHOUT FIGHT SCENES!
UH-OH... I DIDN'T ORDER ANY OF HIS SMALL PRESS COMICS THIS MONTH - I HAD TO CUT THEM SO I COULD INCREASE MY ORDERS ON PSYCHOTIC HERO-MAN #1. WHAT WILL I DO NOW!

WELCOME SEATTLE, DUDE!
UH, YEAH... HI. DID HATE COME IN?
NO!! IT MUST BE LATE!!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY A COPY OF PSYCHOTIC HERO-MAN, INSTEAD!!??
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING.

NO, WAIT! IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK! THE MAIN CHARACTER DOESN'T REALLY HAVE SUPER-POWERS - HE JUST THINKS HE DOES!
I BOUGHT THIS HERO-MAN
ID GRUNGE
AND NONE OF THE SUPER-VILLAINS REALLY HAVE SUPER-POWERS EITHER! THEY'RE JUST HIS BOSS AND HIS LANDLADY - ORDINARY NEUROTIC LOWLIFES EXACTLY LIKE HIM!

HIS WEARING HIS UNDER WEAR ON THE OUTSIDE IS JUST AN EMOTIONAL CRY TO DISPLAY TO THE WORLD HIS INNER SELF!
CRAP
SUPER HOT
BLOOD
DEATH MAN
ITS MERELY ANOTHER FORM OF TRANSVESTISM!

BEST OF ALL, IT'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL!
"AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL"?
YEAH... IN A STAN LEE SORT OF WAY.

HOW TO DRAW HANDS & FEET the Liefeld WAY!
BIG SMASH

NO THANKS. MAYBE I'LL BUY A COPY AT THE SHOP DOWN THE STREET--
THE ONE THAT SOMEHOW HAS THE NEW ISSUE OF HATE IN THEIR WINDOW, EVEN THOUGH "IT'S LATE."

SLAM!
COMICS

YOU THINK IT WOULD HAVE HELPED IF I'D POINTED OUT THE GLOW-IN-THE-DARK CANCER-CAUSING COVER?

1995 ATLANTA DRAGON CON/ACE QUICK SKETCH CONTEST WINNERS!

Roel W. Wielinga, 44, Hephzibah, GA.

Tavares Jones, 21, Elizabethtown, KY.

Roger B. A. Klorese
rogerk@QueerNet.ORG

Mixed thoughts about this issue. Some parts seemed more like a Caliber plug-a-thon than a celebration of two years of a fine anthology series. I'm not at all sure I forgive you for the "Baker Street" tease, either: it's like offering an addict that first free taste.

On the other hand, the ever-glorious "Suburban Nightmares" was worth the price of admission.

You know, I didn't even realize how many Caliber titles were represented in #25 (APPARITION, BAKER STREET, THE JAM, KABUKI and DOMINIQUE). I was just trying to put together what I thought was the best issue I could and it just so happened that a number of Caliber creators and titles were included in that batch. Maybe it just goes to show how much good material there is available from Caliber nowadays.

Olav Beemer
Brugakker 36-06
3704 LP Zeist
The Netherlands

Dear Joe,

After one relatively less interesting and one incredibly disappointing issue, it was good to find out that NEGATIVE BURN #26 was almost infinitely better than the two previous issues combined. Let's examine some of the presented short stories, so I can point out why I came to that conclusion.

"Sandy," the first tale, was a rather strange one. After some pages, I was beginning to wonder where exactly it would go, for I truly had no clue whatsoever. Then, when the final page had been reached, the conclusion was quite gripping, the metaphor about the color of the eyes being both beautiful as well as sad. Of course, providing good art to Paul Jenkins' tale was Avido Khahaifa, whose work seems to get only better and better each new time I see it.

Great "Mr. Mamoulian" feature there. A recap of twenty-eight installments worth of story-line—how's that for service?

"The Kiss Off" undoubtedly was the issue's biggest surprise, as well as probably the very best feature presented in it. While I was unfamiliar with Brian Michael Bendis' art, I have known and liked James Hudnall's writing for some time now, and their collaboration was nothing short of wonderful. Great storytelling, brilliant atmosphere and a killer ending, literally. Let's see more of this, okay?

Another surprise was the second chapter of "Suburban Nightmares." Somehow, the installment felt almost like a cross between Paul Pope and Randy Reynaldo (whose work, by the way, we'll be seeing in these pages shortly, right?), and I felt intrigued with the developments as they occurred before my eyes. Needless to say, I'm looking forward to seeing the continuation of this story-line next ish.

"The Tensor Matrix: FTL" was sweet and short, but what I noticed most was the highly enjoyable, crisp and clear style of artwork by Chris Hunter and Bradley Walton. Although I hadn't heard of them prior to this very issue, the openness their art breathes is extremely inviting and it makes for some good entertaining reading.

Finally, "Stubbs the Cat" is back! It's sure been a while, but thank goodness his return to these pages more than made up for his absence. This is Greg DiGenti at his best, so please, whatever you do, keep his unparalleled humor coming at us!

In closing, this undoubtedly was a superb issue. The book is on the upswing again, and judging from what is to come in the next few issues—I hear Terry Moore is going to provide some artwork pretty soon—it appears there's no slowing down yet! Good job.

Glad to have you back on the positive side, Olav. Be sure to check out the series of James Hudnall's trade paperback collections coming from Caliber after the first of the year. All good stuff I assure you.

Yep, Randy Reynaldo was in this very issue. Hope you enjoyed it and want to see more. And don't worry, Greg DiGenti is going to be around for a long time in these pages. You see, I kind of like his work too.

Mike Leonard
MLeon99@aol.com

Joe,

I'm not a big fan of anthologies, but I love NEGATIVE BURN. I think it's a combination of the shorter stories — if you don't like a piece, there's plenty of others to choose from — and the variety of material and talent you've compiled.

NB #25 was one of the best comics I've read recently — there wasn't a feature I didn't enjoy in the whole bunch (although I'd have to say Dave Mack's "Kabuki" was my fave). The Gaiman sketchbook was a nice inside glimpse at the mind of one of comics' most illustrious minds. Thanks to the short features, I'm really looking forward to seeing full installments of Bernie Mireault's "Jam" and James Pruett's "The Apparition."

NB #26 was also a mind-blower. The Hudnall/Bendis "The Kiss Off" rocked, along with Alan Moore's "Me and Dorothy Parker" and Paul Jenkins' "Sandy."

Anyway, thanks for taking the time out to listen to me, and keep up the great work on NB and Kilroy.

Mike, for those of you who don't know, is the writer of the Caliber Comics series DOORMAN. Do yourself a favor and go out and check out this excellent title.

Jason Whitley
scruffito@aol.com

I got NB #26 the other day and I think the stories and art in this one are better than the ones in NB #24. I especially like Michael Cherkas' artwork. The story is going to be interesting too. Michael Gaydos' artwork is great. I could have done without "The Tensor Matrix." But everything else remains on my good side! Most of all, though, I'm looking forward to the next episode of "Suburban Nightmares." You have to remember I haven't been getting NB on a regular basis, of course I am now!

So you're enjoying Hancock and Cherkas' "Suburban Nightmares" are you? Great! I've been a fan of their stuff for a long time now and was thrilled to be publishing some of their new Material. Be sure to look for SILENT INVASION II from Caliber Comics probably sometime in late '96. It's a sequel of sorts to their award-winning SILENT INVASION series from Renegade Press back in the late 80's (which is still on sale in graphic novel form from the fine folks at NBM).

Since you liked Michael Gaydos' stuff so much be sure to check out his work over on INFERNO, also from Caliber Comics. It's a great book, so please don't let the length between issues one and two turn you off. It's worth the waiting. Writer Mike Carey and artist Michael Gaydos are pouring their all into every issue and it shows!